



# Beach Soundings

Newsletter of the Duxbury Beach Preservation Society

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## A Four-Season Oasis

Duxbury Beach is a lot of things to a lot of people. But Coney Island it's not. And that's the way we like it. It's an extremely well-managed beach that encourages different uses and enjoyment, as long as what's fun for one does not interfere with the rights and activities of any of the other 9,000 visitors on a typical hot summer day—or, with the highly-protected

environmental programs underway at Duxbury Beach.

As you drive over the majestic Powder Point Bridge, you might be awed by the beauty of the bay and possibly inspired to take up wind surfing again. But no matter how captivated you are, have your permit ready or you'll be stopped by a polite

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and earnest Assistant Harbormaster. He/she won't be selling you tickets to a ride, but enthusiastically welcoming, notifying, and educating you, all in less than 6 seconds or the traffic over the bridge will reach back to the high school.

For Harbormaster Don Beers, it's imperative that a visitor's first and every taste of Duxbury Beach be a productive step in the ongoing journey of appropriate and respectful beach activity. Don believes that an educated visitor is the beach's best friend, and strives to achieve this through a public notification program. Whether you've been walking the beach for decades or got lost looking for the King Caesar House, you'll go away from Duxbury Beach with a better understanding of the tidal and sea conditions, weather patterns, endangered species programs, and management activities that make it a unique beach indeed.

Like the fragile jewel it is, Duxbury Beach has been closely watched over by the Harbormaster/Coastal Natural Resources Department since 1991. Active year round, this team patrols the beach every hour on the hour every day making sure that visitors feel safe and that the beach is in good, clean shape. The winter is usually a time of worry, but this year the few storms we've had have actually pushed material up onto the beach and dunes—a welcome change from some past natural disasters. The south/south-easterly winds this season are very healthy for the beach and necessitate only the replacement of snow fences, which become covered by sand.

This spring, the department will prepare for the few and the many—piping plovers and plentiful people, that is. Although you're bound to see a well-known ice cream vendor adorning the parking lot, preparing for the summer crowds does not mean setting up food stands and trinket trucks. It means posting signs, manicuring the established track program for over-sand vehicles, cordoning off for the piping plover's habitat, and being ready for the birds to take their first steps. For it's a careful balance of allowing human activity while protecting the endangered species that keeps our beach open in an era of stringent environmental protection and oversight. If one bird is taken (disturbed, injured or killed), everyone's access to the beach will be in jeopardy.

What can be the hardest part of spring reopening? The serious March/April storms that can destroy carefully laid plans again and again.

Come summer, the department of 3 increases to a staff of well over 20. Well-trained and seasoned, these assistant Harbormasters ready their equipment, procedures, and educational materials to simultaneously handle the harbor and fisheries and wildlife areas, in addition to the beach. From Saquish to Blakemans, these ambassadors/educators make sure your beach visit is safe and enjoyable. With 1 boat outside the beach carrying at least an EMT, 1 boat in the bay, and 7 officers on the beach, the department has crafted a comprehensive program for monitoring all aspects of beach activity and safety. Whether your dog eats your neighbor's hot dog or your child wanders off down the beach, there's a practiced plan ready to save the day.

When fall approaches, there are no canopies and carousels to roll up; instead the beach witnesses the removal of signage and readiness for winter admittance. The natural ambiance of Duxbury Beach, wildly cherished by residents, is on display during this time of quiet but uninterrupted access.

And, while the 4-wheel drives may seem endless on a hot summer day, the peaceful way they coexist with the other uses of the beach—walking, boating, swimming, sunbathing, and fishing—is a testament to the careful management of all organizations associated with keeping Duxbury Beach alive and well, from the important work of the Harbormaster, Duxbury Beach Preservation Society, Duxbury Beach Reservation, and town Selectmen to concerned citizens throughout the town.

We are indeed fortunate to have at our disposal such a well-run, well-tended beach to escape the everyday hustle and bustle of life. Duxbury Beach is our oasis and a natural beauty to be protected and preserved.

